

**COURSE  
GUIDE**

**FMC 211  
FILMS AND CINEMA CENSORSHIP**

**Course Team**

The Course Team Comprising:  
Dr Titilayo Elizabeth Popoola (Developer)  
Dr Titilayo Elizabeth Popoola (Writer)  
Dr Peluola Oladehinde Titiloye (Content Editor)  
Mr Muftau Olanrewaju Biobaku (Copy Editor)  
Lecturer-in-charge (Course Coordinator)



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

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National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
University Village  
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone  
Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway  
Jabi, Abuja

Lagos Office  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island, Lagos

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)

URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

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**CONTENTS****PAGE****INTRODUCTION:**

Censorship has been a part of the global cinematic landscape since the inception of film as an industrialized art form in the 1890s.

Importantly, censorship has been wielded as a tool to construct, reinforce, suppress, and erase various cultural modes and expressions.

This course will trace the role of censorship in film and the ways in which censorship has come to play a critical role in the cultural function of films.

Examining a series of films banned across the globe, the course will address the ways in which film has become a battleground in the “culture wars” around sex, political ideology, gender, race, revolution, class, violence, and pleasure.

**WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE**

The purpose of this course is to x-ray censorship as a global concept.

- Issues, such as the effect of censorship in reinforcement, suppression and removal of cultural modes and expressions will be learnt in this course.
- You will also learn how to analyse the cultural, historical, industrial, and aesthetic dimensions of censorship in relation to film and its effect on sex, gender, race, revolution, class, violence and pleasure.

**COURSE AIMS**

- The purpose of this course is to investigate the connections between film censorship and culture.
- Students will learn how to analyze and do a critique of censorship as a battleground of cultural wars on sex, political ideology, gender, race, revolution, class, violence, and pleasure.

**LEARNING OUTCOME**

- You will learn to discuss censorship generally and its positive and negative effects.
- You will also look at censorship as it is operated in some countries of the world.
- Film censorship as a concept, its origin and the different

terminologies used to guide viewers and the interpretations would be discussed.

- Censored films in different countries of the world would also be examined with a view allowing critiquing, based on your understanding of the process.
- Working through the Course
- Course Materials
- course guide
- study units broken down to (09) units
- assignments file
- relevant textbooks including the ones listed under each units you may also need to listen to programmes and news on the radio and television as a beginner, you need to read watch films and interact with other mass media as often as possible.

In addition to the above, to complete this course, you are advised to read through this course guide to familiarise yourself with the structure of the course; read the Study Units and attempt all Self-Assessment Exercises; complete and submit all assignments for the course; and consult recommended sources for further reading.

Each unit contains Self-Assessment Exercises, and at points in the course you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes.

Study Units

Textbooks and References

Assignment File

Tutor-Marked Assignment

Final Examination and Grading

Presentation Schedule

Course Marking Scheme

Course Overview

How to Get the Most from this Course

Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials

Summary

**MAIN  
COURSE**

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**MODULE 1**

Unit 1	Censorship
Unit 2	Media Censorship
Unit 3	The Role Of Censorship In History And Culture

**UNIT 1 CENSORSHIP****Unit Structure**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Censorship
  - 1.3.1 Origin of Censorship
- 1.4 Types of Censorship
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings
- 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

**1.1 Introduction**

This unit presents the explanation on the meaning and censorship types. The expectation is that the unit will give a clear overview of the topic 'censorship', so that subsequent units in this course will be clearer, such that, you will be able to make critical contributions to the content of this course.

**1.2 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define censorship,
- state the origin of censorship,
- discuss the different types of censorship.

**1.3 Censorship**

The suppression of speech, public communication, or other information is referred to as censorship. This could be done because the item is deemed unpleasant, damaging, sensitive, or inconvenient. Governments, commercial institutions, and other regulating bodies can all engage in censorship.

Censorship can be used by both governments and private groups.

Other individuals, organizations, or groups may propose and petition for censorship. Self-censorship occurs when an individual, such as an author or other creator, participates in suppression of his or her own works or statements for a number of claimed reasons, which may include national security, obscenity, pornography and hate speech. General censorship happens in a variety of media, including speech, books, music, films, other arts, the press, radio, television to safeguard children and other vulnerable populations, to promote or restrict political or religious viewpoints and to prevent slander and libel with a view of avoiding litigation.

Depending on the type, location, and content, direct censorship may or may not be legal. Many countries have strong legal protections against censorship, but none of these protections are absolute in establishing what can and cannot be suppressed. However, a claim of necessity to balance conflicting rights is usually asserted and there are no rules prohibiting people from self-censoring.

### **1.3.1 Origin of Censorship**

Censorship could be traced to Rome when Socrates, in 399 BC, opposed the Athenian state's attempts to restrict his philosophical teachings. The Greek philosopher was accused of ancillary crimes linked to the corruption of Athenian youth and was sentenced to death by consuming the poison.

Plato, Socrates' student, then advocated for censorship in his essay *The Republic II*, where argued showed concern on the kind of stories/fiction that children are exposed to. He wondered why parents allow their children to listen to tales that are contrary to the moulding of their minds to our expectation. Thus censorship came into existence in 443 BC in Rome (Niam, 2015). Euripides (480–406 BC), in contrast to Plato, advocated for the actual liberty of freeborn men, including the right to speak freely. Sweden was the first country to abolish censorship through legislation in 1766.

### **1.4 Types of Censorship**

The removal of content that are indecent or otherwise morally dubious is known as moral censorship. Pornography, for example, is frequently restricted on this rationale, particularly child pornography, which is illegal and censored in the vast majority of countries.



Military censorship refers to the process of keeping military intelligence and tactics secret and out of the hands of the enemy. This is employed in the fight against espionage. For example during war, military personnel at the war front are not expected to disclose their locations in letters or calls, to prevent the enemy from gaining tactical information through them.

When governments withhold information from their citizens, this is known as political censorship. This is frequently done in order to maintain control over the population and to prevent unfettered speech that could lead to insurrection.

Religious censorship is the process of removing material that is considered objectionable by a particular religion. This frequently includes a major religion imposing restrictions on lesser-known religions. Alternatively, when the content of another religion's is deemed inappropriate for their religion, a church may reject it.

Corporate censorship is the process by which editors in corporate media sources act to prevent the publication of information that depicts their company or partners in a poor light, or intervene to prevent alternative offers from reaching the public.

#### Reverse censorship

Reverse censoring is the practice of disseminating inaccurate or misleading information to the general public, often through online social media. Through the fabrication and spread of fake news, the financing of fake commentators, and the deployment of propaganda robots, this type of information control, sometimes by state actors, can distort or drown out disfavoured discourse.

#### Self Censorship

The act of censoring one's own discourse is known as self-censorship. This is done without overt coercion from any single party or institution of authority, but out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities or preferences (real or perceived) of others. Journalists, singers, film producers, authors, and social media users are all guilty of self-censorship.

#### Self-Assessment Exercises 1

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Censorship is.....</li> <li>ii. State and define five censorship types.</li> <li>ii. .... coined the present usage of 'media' in .....</li> </ul> |
|---|

## 1.6 Summary

The suppression of speech, public communication, or other information is referred to as censorship. Censorship can be used by both governments and private groups. Other individuals, organizations, or groups may propose and petition for censorship.

The removal of content that are indecent or otherwise morally dubious is known as moral censorship.

Corporate censorship is the process by which editors in corporate media sources act to prevent the publication of information that depicts their company or partners in a poor light, or intervene to prevent alternative offers from reaching the public. The act of censoring one's own discourse is known as self-censorship. This is done without overt coercion from any single party or institution of authority, out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities or preferences (real or perceived) of others.

Controlling or suppressing the publication or accessing of information on the Internet is referred to as Internet censorship.

Maps censorship involves particular locations being removed or blacked out, or areas being purposefully left out-dated with old images.

Other forms of censorship include, video games censorship, internet censorship, music and social media censorship. It instils repression in order to encourage compliance.

## 1.7 Glossary

Obsenity: Offensive

Pornography: Representative of sexual behaviour in books, pictures, statues, films and other media with the intention of causing sexual arousal.

Impiety: Lack of respect for something considered as sacred.

Espionage: The practice of spying or using spies.

Stereotyping: Associating a particular behaviour with a group.

Aesthetics: Concerned with beauty or appreciation of beauty.

## 1.8 References/Further Readings

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Mette Newth (2010) *The Long History of Censorship, Beacon for Freedom of Expression* (Norway), 2010

### **1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content**

#### Answer to Exercise 1

- i. Censorship is the suppression of speech, public communication, or other information is refer. This could be done because the item is deemed unpleasant, damaging, sensitive, or inconvenient.
- ii. Five censorship types are: Moral, Corporate, Self, Internet and Map Censorship.
  1. The removal of content that are indecent or otherwise morally dubious is known as moral censorship.
  2. Corporate censorship is the process by which editors in corporate media sources act to prevent the publication of information that depicts their company or partners in a poor light, or intervene to prevent alternative offers from reaching the public.
  3. The act of censoring one's own discourse is known as self-censorship. This is done without overt coercion from any single party or institution of authority, out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities or preferences (real or perceived) of others.
  4. Political censorship happens when governments withhold information from their citizens.
  5. Religious censorship is the process of removing material that is considered objectionable by a particular religion. This frequently includes a major religion imposing restrictions on lesser-known religions.

## UNIT 2 MEDIA CENSORSHIP

### Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Media Censorship
  - 1.3.1 Press Censorship
  - 1.3.2 Book Censorship
  - 1.4.1 Issues on Internet Censorship
  - 1.4.2 Social media
    - 14.2.1 Tiktok Censorship
  - 1.5.1 Television Censorship
  - 1.5.2 Art
  - 1.5.2 Video Games
  - 1.5.3 Music
  - 1.5.4 Maps
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings
- 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

### 1.4 Introduction

This unit is an expose on the relationship that exists between censorship and the different media outlets. The various forms of censorship techniques imposed on the different media and their effectiveness are also discussed in this unit.

### 1.5 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to

- define media censorship,
- discuss censorship in the different media,
- evaluate media censorship

### 1.6 Media Censorship

Media censorship refers to the dictatorial tendency of keeping the citizens in oblivion about what is going on in the country or the world at large. All the mass media outlets are consistently being censored under the guise of the need to protect the young ones from amoral contents such as pornography, hate speech, and the need to protect the sovereignty of the state. It involves the restriction on speech, art, books, films, plays, photographs, television programs, internet and news, usually carried out by either the government, the church, private pressure groups, self or

anyone. As a result, the information allowed are often not enough as the need for self preservation through suppression of information by journalist who engage in self censorship or the state may be censoring body.

### **1.3.1 Press Censorship**

The press is often regarded as the fifth columnist with the express responsibility of informing and protecting the public's right to information. But their roles are often restricted by the suppression of speech and writing thought to be obscene, indecent, or a security threat by the state. Censorship usually hampers the operations of the press, whose main duty is to keep the people abreast of situations and events locally and globally. It is a known fact that most countries of the world (Eritrea, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Iran, China, Myanmar ) are under the grip of censorship.

Press censorship may be done by journalists to prevent arrest, lawsuit or in a bid to prevent the exposure of sensitive information. In Israel, journalists agreed among themselves not to divulge state secrets for security reasons. Often, the instrument of the state may be deployed to suppress information through intimidation of the press.

Media houses may be shut down by the government, reporters may be arrested, newspapers may be seized and burnt before distribution, in some cases, such media houses are acquired by the state, especially during war. The media suffer a lot during war as the state often move in to monitor all correspondence, even hugs and kisses were censored to prevent information exchange via code (Day, 2001).

### **1.3.2 Book Censorship**

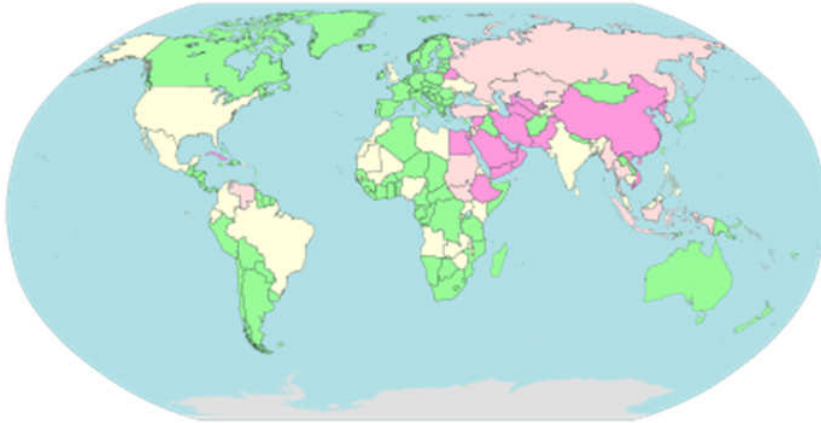
Book censorship is the restricted circulation of a book or the outright ban of a book. At times, it may involve the removal of offensive materials from the book. Such prohibition can be implemented at the national or subnational level, and violations might result in legal consequences. Local, community-based challenges to books are also possible. As a result, books can be taken from classrooms or libraries, however these restrictions usually do not extend beyond that.

## **1.4 Internet Censorship**

Controlling or suppressing the publication or accessing of information on the Internet is referred to as Internet censorship. It might be carried out at the request of the government or on their own initiative by governments

or private entities. Individuals and groups may self-censor for a variety of reasons, including intimidation and fear.

### 1.4.1 Issues on Internet Censorship



The problems that come with Internet censorship are comparable to those that come with offline censorship of traditional media. One distinction is that online, national borders are more permeable since people of a country that prohibits the dissemination of particular information can find it on websites housed outside of the country. As a result, even though they have no physical or legal authority over the websites themselves, censors must try to limit access to content. This necessitates the employment of Internet-specific technical censorship techniques such as site blocking and content filtering.

Furthermore, a crucial component of the Internet, the Domain Name System (DNS), is dominated by centralized and few corporations. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) manages the most extensively used DNS root. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) manages the most extensively used DNS root (ICANN). As an administrator, they have the authority to shut down and seize domain names when they think it essential, which is usually based on government directives. Authorities can easily censor the internet since they have control over what should and should not be on it.

### 1.4.2 Social media

Filtering social media posts with automated approaches can limit consumers capacity to express themselves online. Restriction of information that can be accessed through the social media is explained as being due to the increased use of social media in various countries which has often resulted in citizens organizing protests via social media, dubbed

'Twitter Revolutions.' The Nigerian 'End Sars' of 2020, and the Arab Spring demonstrations, which began in 2010, were the most noteworthy of these social media-led rallies. The Tunisian authorities initiated a hack of Tunisian people's Facebook accounts in response to the usage of social media in these protests, with allegations of accounts being deleted.

Social media communications in China, for example, are automatically monitored based on their content. In a 2013 study, Harvard political science professor Gary King discovered that posts on the government were less likely to be deleted, regardless of whether they were supportive or critical of the government. Postings about collective action were more likely to be deleted than posts about non-collective activity. At the moment, social media blocking appears to be primarily utilized to impede Internet users' ability to organize protests. Residents' dissatisfaction with local government benefits the Chinese government because it allows state and national leaders to replace unpopular individuals. King and his colleagues were able to predict when certain officials will be removed based on the volume of negative social media messages.

Because research has shown that criticism is tolerated on social media sites, it is not restricted unless there is a greater likelihood of collective action. It makes no difference whether the criticism is positive or negative toward the leaders of the states; the main goal of censoring certain social media posts is to ensure that no major actions are taken as a result of something said on the internet. Posts that question the Chinese Communist Party's political leadership role in the government are more likely to be blocked because they constitute a threat to the Chinese Communist Party.

### **142.1 Tiktok Censorship**

Certain hashtags on the TikTok platform have been classified by the platform's coding, which dictates how viewers can interact with the content or hashtag in question. Due to their references to particular social movements and LGBTQ identity, some shadow prohibited tags include #acab, #GayArab, and #gej. Some analysts believe that as TikTok guidelines become increasingly specialized around the world, there will be more restriction than before.

## **1.5 Films**

Apart from the traditional arguments of pornography and obscenity, some films are prohibited due to shifting racial attitudes or political correctness in order to avoid ethnic stereotyping or offence, despite their historical or aesthetic significance. One example is the yet discontinued "Censored



Eleven" series of animated cartoons, which may have been harmless then, but are tagged as incorrect now.

Censorship of films is practiced in a number of nations. Film censorship is accomplished by restricting a state citizen or censoring the producer or prohibiting the film partially or completely.

### 1.5.1 Television Censorship

The Nigerian government censors the electronic media through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), which is responsible for monitoring and regulating broadcast media, but there is no established proof of Government's control of the media. Television censorship in the United States prohibits obscene, profane and indecent content from being broadcast on live television, radio, cable and satellite television and satellite radio between 6am and 10pm. It is so serious that defaulters are liable to a fine of \$325,000 on the station that runs fowl of the law.

### 1.5.2 Art

Due of its evocative power, art is both admired and feared. Destroying or suppressing art has the capacity to further validate its meaning.

Graham Ovenden's photographs and paintings were ordered to be burned by a London magistrate court in 2015 for projecting images of nude and semi-nude young girls (Lusher, 2015), and copies of them were withdrawn from the online Tate exhibition.



Artworks using these four colours were banned by Israeli law in the 1980s

Palestinians were detained for displaying such artwork or even carrying sliced melons with the same pattern, as a result of a 1980 Israeli regulation prohibiting artwork made of the four colours of the Palestinian flag.

Moath al-Alwi is a Guantanamo Bay detainee who expresses himself through model ships. Alwi does so using the limited tools he has at his disposal, which include dental floss and shampoo bottles, as well as a small set of rounded-edged scissors. A handful of Alwi's works are on display at New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Other

artwork done by inmates is also on exhibit at the College. Some of the convicts may be unable to communicate with the outside world because of the artwork on display. However, things have just altered. The military has devised a new guideline that prevents artwork from leaving the Guantanamo Bay Military Prison. Alwi's and other prisoners' art is now government property, which means it can be destroyed or disposed off in any way the government sees fit, and it is no longer the artist's property.

### **1.5.2 Video Games**

Since the early 1980s, proponents of video games have stressed their use as an expressive medium, saying that they should be protected under rules protecting freedom of speech and as a learning aid. Video games, according to critics, are dangerous and should be subjected to governmental scrutiny and regulations. Due to regional classification regulations, many video games have some features deleted or modified. Blood spatter and gore, for example, are absent from the Japanese and PAL versions of *No More Heroes*. Scenes of decapitation are indicated but not seen. Scenes where body parts are missing after being sliced off are replaced with the same scenario but with the body parts entirely intact.

### **1.5.3 Music**

This is the act of removing sections of a song or its total ban for political, moral or religious reasons. States, churches, educational institutions, families, shops, and lobbying groups have all at one time or the other, used music restriction, which in most cases violates international human rights accords.

### **1.5.4 Maps**

Map censorship is the modification of maps to black out or disguise a particular location or town. The approach is frequently used for military purposes. For example, in former East Germany, the approach was employed to make defection efforts more difficult, particularly in locations close to the West German border. Google Maps also employs map censorship, with particular locations being removed or blacked out, or areas being purposefully left out-dated with old images.

### **Self-Assessment Exercises 2**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Define media censorship</li><li>ii. Discuss Press, Social media and film censorship.</li></ol> |
|---|

## 1.6 Summary

Media censorship refers to the dictatorial tendency of keeping the citizens in oblivion about what is going on in the country or the world at large. All the mass media outlets are consistently being censored under the guise of the need to protect the young ones from amoral contents such as pornography, hate speech, and the need to protect the sovereignty of the state. It includes restrictions placed on speech, art, books, films, plays, photographs, television programs, internet and news, usually carried out by either the government, the church, private pressure groups, self or any one.

The press is often regarded as the fifth columnist with the express responsibility of informing and protecting the public's right to information, but their roles are often restricted by the suppression of speech and writing thought to be obscene or indecent by the state. Censorship usually hampers the operations of the press, whose main duty is to keep the people abreast of situations and events locally and globally. It is a known fact that most countries of the world (Eritrea, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Iran, China, Myanmar) are under the grip of censorship.

Book censorship is the restricted circulation of a book or the outright ban of a book. At times, it may involve the removal of offensive materials from the book. Local, community-based challenges to books are also possible. As a result, books can be taken from classrooms or libraries, however these restrictions usually do not extend beyond that.

Internet Censorship is the act of controlling or suppressing the publication or accessing of information on the Internet. It might be carried out at the request of the government or on their own initiative by governments or private entities. Individuals and groups may self-censor for a variety of reasons, including intimidation and fear.

Apart from the traditional arguments of pornography and obscenity, some films are prohibited due to shifting racial attitudes or political correctness in order to avoid ethnic stereotyping or offence, despite their historical or aesthetic significance.

Map censorship is the modification of maps to black out or disguise a particular location or town. The approach is frequently used for military purposes.

This is the act of removing sections of a song or its total ban for political, moral or religious reasons.

Due to regional classification regulations, many video games have some features deleted or modified. Blood spatter and gore, for example, are absent from the Japanese and PAL versions of *No More Heroes*.

Art censorship is the destruction or suppression of art.

## **1.7 Glossary**

## **1.8 References/Further Readings**

Ryan, Fergus; Fritz, Audrey; Impiombato, Daria (2020). *TickTock Censorship*: 04–24.

Ashley, John; Jayousi, Nedal (December 2013). 'The Connection between Palestinian Culture and the Conflict' (PDF). *Discourse, Culture, and Education in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. netanya.ac.il (Report). Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Israel Office. p. 55. Archived from the original (PDF) on 10 February 2019. Retrieved 21 May 2017. In 1980, Israel banned art exhibitions and paintings of "political significance", with the grouping of the four colours of the Palestinian flag in any one painting also forbidden.

Thompson, Erin (27 November 2017). 'Opinion: Art Censorship at Guantanamo Bay'. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 7 February 2021.

### **1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content.**

#### **Answer to question 2**

- i. Media censorship is the restriction placed on speech, art, books, films, plays, photographs, television programs, internet and news, usually carried out by either the government, the church, private pressure groups, self or any one.
- ii.
  - a. The press is often regarded as the fifth columnist with the express responsibility of informing and protecting the public's right to information, but their roles are often restricted by the suppression of speech and writing thought to be obscene or indecent by the state. Censorship usually hampers the operations of the press, whose main duty is to keep the people abreast of situations and events locally and globally. It is a known fact that most countries of the world (Eritrea, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Iran, China, Myanmar ) are under the grip of censorship.
  - b. Social media censorship is the filtering of social media posts with automated approaches in order to limit consumers capacity to express themselves online. Restriction of information that can be accessed through the social is explained as being due to the increased use of social media in various countries which has often resulted in citizens organizing protests via social media, dubbed 'Twitter Revolutions.'
  - c. Film censorship is accomplished by restricting a state citizen or censoring the producer or prohibiting the film partially or completely.

## **UNIT 3 THE ROLE OF CENSORSHIP IN HISTORY AND CULTURE**

### **Unit Structure**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.4 The Benefits of Censorship
- 1.5 Argument against Censorship
  - 1.5.1 Disadvantages of Censorship
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings

### **1.3 Introduction**

Censorship is a social concept that transcends generations and it is prevalent in virtually every sector of the world because at one time or the other, issues of suppression of information or visuals have come up for reasons that are genuine for its enforcement.

This unit looks at the different roles that censorship has performed and effect of such enforcement on politics and situation such as race, sex and violence.

### **1.4 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will be able to

- discuss censorship in relation to culture,
- state its other functions in the society.
- do a critique of censorship in relation to its roles in the society.

### **1.5 The Role of Censorship in the Society**

Censorship is a concept that is peculiar to all known sectors of human existence and it is set up in institutions, organisations, religious bodies, schools and in government with the express purpose of protecting the sensibilities of the people concerned from corruption, violence and obscenity. It has been argued expressly that the main function of censorship is to present a smooth system of administration and peaceful human co-existence. It allows families and societies to set their own limitations, establish norms, and create conditions that suit their needs without forcing their morality or values on others.

## 1.4 The Benefits of Censorship

### 1. Hate speech can be reduced in society by censorship.

The notion that all speech is equal is debatable. This is because people use certain words in an attempt to silence the right of others to speak. A speech that undermines the right of others, suppress the believe of others and imposes his own believe as being superior to others, falls into the category of hate speech. As a result of the prevalence of hate speech, it took over a century for minorities and women to achieve a semblance of equal rights. It does not matter if it is presented in notions like religious liberty, state rights, or patriotism; it will still be hate speech to others.

Censorship allows us to halt the spread of hatred before it ever begins. We are already constrained by education, family, entertainment, commerce, and other factors. As a result of this restricting process, additional options for equality arise.

### 2. Children can be protected from harmful content through censorship.

In today's world, parents have a lot of work to do to shield their children from negative influences. There is content everywhere that could lead to disastrous interactions in the future, including items that get past parental filters and kid-friendly apps. Children's understanding of the world, make them have fewer reservations about communicating with strangers online than adults. They are more innocent and curious, and they may also be shy and lonely.

Censorship enables parents to prevent potential risks by preventing a children's lack of experience and foresight from getting them into trouble. Such constraints, keep everyone safer by stopping people before they react to a situation.

### 3. Censorship has the potential to lessen societal strife.

If one spends enough time on the Internet, he/she will find something that will be upsetting. The objective of censorship is not to prevent people from accessing information that they might find objectionable. If it were the case, we wouldn't be able to use the internet. We can use this approach to restrict access to information that may have a negative impact on the culture of our homes, towns, or countries.

Based on this principle, Netflix and Saudi Arabia collaborate to build targeted zones of censorship. Whether you agree or disagree with the approach, this work restricts access to potentially harmful content.

4. Censorship can give a country's image an extra layer of protection.

We also employ censorship to limit how much information the average public receives from their government, corporations, and huge organizations on a daily basis. Without this concept, top-secret documents might be made public by making a simple request. There is therefore, less risk of harm if certain sorts of data are excluded from society's primary flow.

5. Artists, innovators, and inventors have their rights protected by censorship.

Copyright laws are a type of censorship. Patents and any other legal framework that grants someone exclusive access to a particular type of content or work without enabling others to do the same are examples of this. These safeguards are in place to safeguard the creation rights of the first person to explore this concept.

The cornerstone of an economy is the prevention of plagiarism and intellectual property theft. If an individual's work is not protected in some way, it can be stolen by someone who can put it together for lesser amount than the original owner. The accepted components of censorship that are maintained in societies, allow small firms to remain competitive.

6. Censorship gives us a tool to combat misleading information.

Businesses are prohibited from lying to you about their products or services by censorship laws. Advertisements must accurately reflect what you may expect if you buy something. Fines and penalties can be imposed if you do not keep your word. Businesses would not be able to say or do anything to entice you to buy their products if they did not have this edge. The risks of deception is thus avoided as a result of the safeguards that stay in place through censorship.

7. Censorship has the potential to improve people's understanding.

When it comes to media and the many forms of content that are available, people prefer to trust what they see. Government and law enforcement officials can provide better safety, minimize the spread of misinformation and encourage people to think about what they see before making a decision by removing objects that could cause panic from public display. This strategy can be used to encourage the flow of negative data in order to get a specific result, but it can also be used to achieve a positive effect.



## 8. Identity theft can be mitigated via censorship.

Every year, about 15 million cases of identity theft are reported. Experian recently announced a data breach that exposed the personal information of over 120 million users. People can become victims of crime without recognizing it until they need to apply for credit or receive a warning in the mail since there is so much information floating around on the Internet and in other public places that is easily accessible.

Identity theft can happen to anyone, including children. Their spotless profiles are enticing, especially if there is no age or data verification throughout the application procedure. Censorship of this data can give an extra degree of security by preventing access to it while holding those who keep it accountable for their actions.

## 9. Our rating system was influenced by censorship.

Censorship can get out of hand at times, but it is also a tool that can be utilized for good. The ratings systems that we use for entertainment products, such as movies, video games, and music, are an outstanding example of this benefit. Until 1984, movies were rated PG through R, which led to the creation of the PG-13 rating because parents demanded action after taking their children to see *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

Music ratings allow us to see if the lyrics are explicit before deciding whether or not to listen to the song. TV ratings can be used to determine whether a show is appropriate for children or not.

### **1.5 Argument against Censorship**

There has never been a problem or event in human history that did not have its own set of flaws. When it becomes legal to restrict the actions, words, and thoughts of one group of people, it opens the door for other groups in society to be targeted as well. Some people see censorship as a method to introduce common-sense limitations to our daily lives in order to keep ourselves safe and safeguard our children, but it most times degenerates to the oppressors forcing their morality or values on others. This situation is often the case where a dominant sect tries to enforce their believe and manner of dressing on others. For example, in some parts of northern Nigeria, a female without a head covering may be molested and at times physically attacked, because they believe that a woman without a head scarf is a prostitute.

That is not to imply that any and all sorts of content should be permitted. We cannot overlook the dangers of murder films, child pornography, and

other such goods that inspire violence against others or depict actual harm in the images.

### **1.5.1 Disadvantages of Censorship**

1. It oppresses one set of people in order to satisfy the desires of the majority.

A museum director was once detained when sexually graphic images by Robert Mapplethorpe were included in a show he was overseeing. Although the artist's work features nuances and a certain amount of suggestiveness in images that are generally black and white, it is devoid of violent or suggestive content that might incite lawlessness.

It is safe to argue that the United States is the most speech-protective country in the world, based on its laws. But things are different when it comes to sexual speech because the law still contains traces of the country's Puritan background. Even the Supreme Court has stated that censorship for moral reasons is legal.

2. It enables people to construct a specific story in society and refer to it as fact.

When people witness violence in video games, read about it in literature, or see examples of it in movies or on TV, they frequently urge for it to be censored. The truth about fictitious violence is that it does not make normally stable people desire to hurt someone. Nothing would be safe from censorship if all materials are suppressed based on the acts of unstable people.

3. People are discouraged from seeking job prospects as a result of it.

If we live in a world where everything is censored, we will live in a world where nothing can be done without permission from someone in authority. That means that every company, every idea, and even the foods you eat every night would have an official seal of approval. It produces an Orwellian picture in which direct control by a powerful figure or state is essential for the common good.

As a result of this disadvantage, at least one person is always able to rise beyond the cultural structures. They are given permission to do whatever they want because everything else must be approved by them. You might be able to do that if you have enough money or power.

4. It lowers the average public's overall IQ.

Censorship necessitates the strict control of the general public in order to achieve particular results every time. It is an attempt to keep people from learning the truth about whatever scenario they are in. Even attempting to indicate that the content is fraudulent or untrustworthy, as the Trump Administration frequently does with the news media, is a form of official censorship.

It is one thing for someone to remark, 'I don't enjoy watching CNN because their news reports seem to be false'. But when a country's president declares the news media to be the adversary of the state, it establishes a position of authority, especially when he claims that it has a big role to play in terms of tone and everything.

5. It inhibits a person from freely expressing themselves.

Anyone could post whatever they wanted without fear of retaliation in a no-rules atmosphere that is utterly devoid of censorship. By prohibiting the use of some things tagged as 'obscene', the United States treads a delicate line along this route. Other countries go a step further, forbidding social media posts that are considered to be in conflict with the government's official position.

Mic's Nicholas Demas compiled a profile of eight social media users who were jailed in 2013 as a result of what they wrote online. Matt Woods was sentenced to three months in prison after making indecent comments about a five year old kid while inebriated. Some governments use their power to detain persons who are felt to be in opposition through such allegations.

6. It transfers the burden of consuming on the society's shoulders.

When the government decides what information people have access to, there is no longer any personal responsibility for one's conduct. This procedure gives the person in charge of enforcing the policies influence over ethics, morals, and standards. When someone agrees to let another person, company, or elected official tell them how to think, feel, and act, it becomes much simpler to relinquish control over their lives' decisions. Censorship turns people into commodities rather than persons.

For example, if someone makes anti-government, violent, or sexually graphic comments in China, the information will be automatically deleted.

7. It has a negative influence on the economy at every level.

When censorship begins to ban any form of content because it does not meet someone's definition of what is acceptable or offensive to them, economic opportunities at all levels of society become limited. Businesses will no longer be allowed to promote themselves for fear of offending someone. Companies will be unable to teach employees since the procedures may be offensive to some. It creates a society in which others dictate our actions, with those with the loudest voices often wielding the most power.

8. It makes it possible for a false story to become the truth.

If you ask the ordinary North Korean about the globe, they will tell you that the United States is one of the worst countries on the planet, that their own standard of living is outstanding, and that life is always lovely. Never mind that the average monthly income in that country is \$3 or less, that eighteen million people require food aid to avoid starvation, and that basic medical care is unavailable. Extreme human rights issues including complete restrictions on freedom of expression, religious practices, and even independent civil society organizations exist in South Korea. It is a land of torture, arbitrary detention, public humiliation and execution, still they believe that their country is the best in the world.

The Trump administration classified anything that contradicts its point of view as phony because it implied that their information was the accurate one. It was another example of a false narrative designed to elicit a specific reaction from supporters in order to maintain control.

9. Being involved in the practice of censorship is costly.

In 2015, it cost more than \$2 billion to shut down the Internet to prevent specific content items from being viewed by the general population. It can cost more than \$100 million to cut connectivity in just one country. When it comes to the practical application of censorship on others, those costs are just the tip of the iceberg.

China spends more than \$2 billion per year just to keep its firewall in place, which restricts online information access. Hundreds of thousands of people monitor individual activities, with some sites allowing back-end access to make things easier.

When one adds up all of the direct and indirect costs in every other category, it will be discovered that the world spends well over \$100 billion to create the different information flows that people accept as fact.

10. It instils repression in order to encourage compliance. JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is one of the most widely banned books in the world today. The author was a devout Catholic and a close friend of C.S. Lewis, which makes this fact all the more remarkable. He once wrote Lewis a letter in which he stated that his trilogy and *The Hobbit* were written unconsciously from a Christian perspective at first, and then consciously edited to include those themes.

These works are most likely to be banned in Christian churches and schools because they are perceived as anti-religious or anti-Christian. That is why it is so harmful for society to have a single point of view in control of censoring. It can be an ill-informed opinion that is completely contrary to the work in question, yet the power it has to condemn can influence countless others.

### **Self-Assessment Exercises 2**

- i. List five advantages and five disadvantages of censorship.

### **1.6 Summary**

The benefits of censorship are as follows. Hate speech can be reduced in society by censorship. Children can be protected from harmful content through censorship. It lessens societal strifes and protects a country's image. The practice of censorship is costly. 7. Censorship has the potential to improve one's understanding. Artists, innovators, and inventors have their rights protected by censorship.

Disadvantages of censorship: It oppresses one set of people in order to satisfy the desires of the majority. It makes it possible for a false story to become the truth. It has a negative influence on the economy at every level. It transfers the burden of consuming on society's shoulders. It inhibits a person from freely expressing themselves. It lowers the average public's overall IQ.

### **1.7 Glossary**

**Hate Speech:** Abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group on the bases of religion, race or sexual behaviour.

## 1.8 References/Further Readings

Gilbert, Nora.(2013) *Better Left Unsaid: Victorian Novels, Hays Code Films and Benefits of Censorship*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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### **1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content**

#### Answer to Exercise 2

- iii. Advantages of censorship are as follows.
  - 1. Hate speech can be reduced in society by censorship.
  - 2. Children can be protected from harmful content through censorship.
  - 3. It lessens societal strife and protects a country's image.
  - 4. The practice of censorship is costly.
  - 5. Censorship has the potential to improve one's understanding.
  
- b. Disadvantages of censorship:
  - 1. It oppresses one set of people in order to satisfy the desires of the majority.
  - 2. It makes it possible for a false story to become the truth.
  - 3. It has a negative influence on the economy at every level.
  - 4. It transfers the burden of consuming on society's shoulders.
  - 5. It inhibits a person from freely expressing themselves.

**MODULE 2**

Unit 1	Censorship Practise In Some Countries Of The World
Unit 2	Censorship In Nigeria
Unit 3	Censorship And The Cinema

**UNIT 1 CENSORSHIP PRACTISE IN SOME COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD****Unit Structure**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcome
- 1.3 Censorship in Countries
  - 1.3.1 Canada.
  - 1.3.2 Cuba
  - 1.3.3 China
  - 1.3.4 Eastern Bloc
  - 1.3.6 France
  - 1.3.7 India
  - 1.3.8 Iran
  - 1.3.9 Malaysia
  - 1.3.10 Serbia
  - 1.3.11 Singapore
  - 1.3.12 Soviet Union
  - 1.3.13 United States
  - 1.3.14 Uruguay
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings
- 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

**1.1 Introduction**

Censorship is a known concept all over the world. Almost all the nations of the world have at one time or the other banned a film or more. This unit is a summary of censorship in some countries of the world with a view of familiarising you with the issues and practise of censorship in different countries.

**4.2 Learning Outcome**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to

- describe censorship,
- situate censorship by country,



- examine censorship in relation to rights of people.

### **1.3 Censorship in Countries**

Censorship is a known concept all over the world. Almost all the nations of the world have at one time or the other banned a book, religion, political organisation, film or more. This unit is a summary of censorship in some countries of the world with a view of familiarising you with censorship and its practice in different countries.

#### **1.3.1 Canada.**

Censorship in Canada is generally limited to obscenities, pornography and child pornography depicting or advocating non-consensual sex, sexual violence, degradation, or dehumanization, in particular that which causes harm. Very little is formally censored in Canada. Most films are simply classified by the British Columbia Film Classification Office, which is run by Consumer Protection BC, a non-profit Crown company whose classifications are officially utilized by British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Manitoba.

#### **1.3.2 Cuba**

Previously, the Communist Party's Department of Revolutionary Orientation, which develops and coordinates propaganda techniques, was in charge of the Cuban media. The use of the Internet is limited and regulated in the country.

#### **1.3.3 China**

The People's Republic of China monitors the internet with sophisticated filtering techniques known as the Golden Shield Project. Free speech and artistic creation are subject to state control. Politically sensitive search results are also removed by popular search engines like Baidu.

#### **1.3.4 Eastern Bloc**

In the Eastern Bloc, there was strict censorship, the different ministries of culture across the bloc kept a tight grip on their writers. The state's propaganda needs were mirrored in the cultural items produced there. In the early years, censorship was strictly enforced by party-approved censors. Even weather forecasts were adjusted during the Stalinist period. Weather forecasts in Romania were doctored under Nicolae Ceaușescu so that temperatures did not appear to soar above or fall below the levels that required workers to stop working.

To prevent the manufacture and distribution of samizdat or unauthorized self-published books and magazines, copying machines were strictly regulated. Possession of even a single samizdat text, such as a book by Andrei Sinyavsky, was considered a major felony that could result in a KGB visit.

### **1.3.6 France**

Censorship is not a strange phenomenon in France, it was particularly prevalent in the 16th and 19th centuries, though still in existence today, it is somehow limited now. An instance of it was in the face of dwindling car sales in 2020, France had to ban a television commercial for a Dutch bicycle firm, claiming that the commercial unfairly tarnished the motor sector.

### **1.3.7 India**

Given India's history of communal tensions, the Constitution of India provides freedom of expression but includes certain restrictions on content in order to ensure communal and religious harmony. Anything that threatens the unity, integrity, defence, security, or sovereignty of India, cordial relations with foreign governments, or public order, according to the Information Technology Rules of 2011, is considered undesirable content.

### **1.3.8 Iran**

Iran used similar methods of press suppression as Nicolae Ceaușescu did in Romania, but with greater potential for violence. Social media, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook etc are under strict control.

### **1.3.9 Malaysia**

Censorship is practised in Malaysia. Pornography, nude scenes in books, magazines, films are not allowed. Government information that are considered, sensitive materials are usually blackened in prints. Non-Muslims in Malaysia are also penalized under subsections 48(3) and (4) of the Penang Islamic Religious Administration Enactment 2004 for using, writing, or publishing the following words in any form, version, or translation in any language, or for use in any publicity material in any medium: "Allah", "Firman Allah", "Ulama", "Hadith", "Ibadah", "Kaabah", "Qadhi", "Illahi

### 1.3.10 Serbia

Censorship in Serbia is neither direct nor transparent, but it is easy to verify. The government in Serbia is very sensitive to criticism, and this has led to self-censorship on the part of the citizens. The Prime Minister has been accused of anti-democratic strongman tendencies by a number of news outlets. Journalists organisations expressed worry over media freedom in Serbia in July 2014, citing Vui as an example.

Five members of the US Congress (Edie Bernice Johnson, Carlos Curbelo, Scott Perry, Adam Kinzinger, and Zoe Lofgren) notified US Vice President Joseph Biden in September 2015 that Aleksandar's brother, Andrej Vui, is leading a group responsible for degrading media freedom in Serbia.

### 1.3.11 Singapore

The film classification system based on the film act is now used to classify films according to age ratings in Singapore. This now allows people to choose the particular film that is applicable to them. This now affords the people the opportunity of a wide range of choice in film audience.

The present situation is different from what previously obtained, where Section 33 of the Films Act in the Republic of Singapore prohibited the production, distribution, and display of 'party political films,' punishable by a fine of up to \$100,000 or a sentence of up to two years in prison. A 'party political film', according to the Act, is any film or video that (a) is an advertisement made by or on behalf of any political party in Singapore, or anybody whose objects are wholly or mainly related to politics in Singapore or any branch of such party or body or (b) is made by or on behalf of any person and directed towards any political end in Singapore.

*A Vision of Persistence*, a short documentary about opposition politician J. B. Jeyaretnam, was banned in 2001 for being a 'party political film.' After being warned that they could face legal action, the documentary's creators, Ngee Ann Polytechnic academics, issued written apologies and withdrew the film from the 2001 Singapore International Film Festival in April. On the same grounds, Martyn See's short documentary *Singapore Rebel*, which recorded Singapore Democratic Party leader Dr Chee Soon Juan's actions of civil disobedience, was barred from the 2005 Singapore International Film Festival, and See is being investigated for suspected Films Act violations.

However, when political films supporting the ruling Peoples' Action Party are made, this law is frequently disregarded (PAP). In 2005, for

example, Channel News Asia's five-part documentary series on Singapore's PAP ministers was not classified a party political film.

When political films are made about political parties from other countries, exceptions are made. As a result, films like Michael Moore's 2004 documentary *Fahrenheit 911* can be screened regardless of the legislation.

The Films Act has however been changed since March 2009 to enable party political films if they are evaluated factually and objectively by a consultation group. The ban on *Singapore Rebel* was then lifted a few months later by the committee.

### **1.3.12 Soviet Union**

Until Mikhail Gorbachev became its leader, the Soviet Union had no independent press; all reporting was controlled by the Communist Party or allied groups. Pravda, the Soviet Union's most widely circulated newspaper, held a monopoly. Only foreign periodicals published by communist parties, sympathetic to the Soviet Union were available.

### **1.3.13 United States**

Censorship happens in the United States through books, film festivals, politics, and public schooling. Furthermore, critics of U.S. campaign funding reform claim that the reform puts broad restrictions on political expression.

### **1.3.14 Uruguay**

Uruguay was overthrown by a military coup in 1973 by the right-wing military dictatorship and the government imposed censorship. Writer Eduardo Galeano, for example, was imprisoned and later compelled to flee. His book, *Open Veins of Latin America* was also banned. Under the present democratic system of government, Uruguay enjoy a measure of freedom in press, media, religion, electoral right, gender issues and reduction in inhuman treatment.

## **1.6 Summary**

Censorship is a tool for moral upgrade and also for political repression. As an instrument of oppression, dictator led countries like the Communist countries such as China, Soviet Union, Cuba, The Eastern block use it as an instrument of oppression. Uruguay was overthrown by a military coup in 1973, and the government imposed censorship. Writer Eduardo Galeano, for example, was imprisoned and later compelled to flee, but

censorship in Uruguay became relaxed since its democratic dispensation. Section 33 of the Films Act in the Republic of Singapore previously prohibited the production, distribution, and display of ‘party political films’. But the political film of another country and the political film that supports the governing party are allowed. The situation has since changed to film ratings for different ages.

In Canada and America, censorship is generally limited to obscenities, pornography and child pornography depicting or advocating non-consensual sex, sexual violence, degradation, or dehumanization, in particular, that which causes harm.

To avoid history of communal tensions, the Constitution of India provides freedom of expression but includes certain restrictions on content in order to ensure communal and religious harmony.

Censorship in Malaysia is a religious one. Non-Muslims in Malaysia are penalized under subsections 48(3) and (4) of the Penang Islamic Religious Administration Enactment 2004 for using, writing, or publishing the following words in any form, version, or translation in any language, or for use in any publicity material in any medium: ‘Allah’, ‘Firman Allah’, ‘Ulama’, ‘Hadith’, ‘Ibadah’, ‘Kaabah’, ‘Qadhi’, ‘Illahi’.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 3

- i. Describe censorship in India.
- ii. Compare censorship in communist countries with censorship in Canada.

### 1.7 Glossary

- Degradation: The act of reducing in rank, character or reputation
- Non-consensual: Not agreed to by one or more of the people involved
- Forecast: Foresee, anticipate, look forward to.
- Communist: An advocate of the theory and practice of communism.
- Dehumanisation: Degrading people with respect to their best quality.

### 1.8 References/Further Readings

### **1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content**

Answer to Question 3

- i. In India, anything that threatens the unity, integrity, defence, security, or sovereignty of India, cordial relations with foreign governments, or public order, according to the Information Technology Rules of 2011, is considered undesirable content and such an item is censored.
- ii. Censorship is generally limited to obscenities, pornography and child pornography depicting or advocating non-consensual sex, sexual violence, degradation, or dehumanization, in particular that which causes harm. Very little is formally censored in Canada. There is censorship in China also, but it is more politically oriented. The People's Republic of China monitors the internet with sophisticated filtering techniques known as the Golden Shield Project. Politically sensitive search results are removed by popular search engines like Baidu.

## UNIT 2 CENSORSHIP IN NIGERIA

### Unit Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Censorship in Nigeria
  - 1.3.1 Press Censorship
  - 1.3.2 Military Censorship
- 1.4 Electronic Media and Entertainment Censorship
  - 1.4.1 Television Censorship
  - 1.4.2 Internet Censorship
- 1.5 History of National Film and Video Censors Board
  - 1.5.1 The NFVCB's Role in the Nigerian Film Industry
    - 1.5.2.1 The Board's Functions
  - 1.5.3 Involvement of the NFVCB
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

### 2.1 Introduction

Censorship is an issue that is approached with utmost seriousness in Nigeria. This unit is a presentation of what censorship is all about in Nigeria, from the press to military, electronic media, television and the film industry. The establishment of the Nigeria, Film and Video Censors Board, its roles and goal are topics of discussion in this unit.

### 2.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state what censorship in Nigeria entails,
- Describe press, military, film censorship,
- State the criteria for licencing of films by NFVCB,
- Classify the activities of NFVCB in Nigeria,

### 1.3 Censorship in Nigeria

Section 39 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria constitution protects freedom of expression in Nigeria. Despite this constitutional safeguard, the Nigerian government has maintained influence over the media for much of the country's history, with some instances continuing to this day. Between 1979 and 1983, the government of the Second Nigerian Republic delegated censorship to the military for a brief while. During that period, the military were in charge of censorship and all forms of information suppression of the government.

The main focus of the Nigerian Censors Board are certain types of ideas, such as ethnic debates, political opposition, and moral ambiguity.

### 1.3.1 Press Censorship

The Nigerian press was privately owned from 1859 to 1960. However, because the majority of newspaper owners were politically active, these journals were frequently used to promote the political interests of their owners within certain limit. That is, those periodicals, newspapers were also subjected to censorship as a measure for peace within the regions. Furthermore, pressure from ethnic groups was a factor that necessitates caution in news organizations, thus resulting in self-censorship. News that exposes a tribe's negative aspects may face a boycott or, in some situations, cause ethnic strife, thus necessitating caution on all sides. In 1957, the Igbo journal *West African Pilot* published news with a blatant prejudice towards a Yoruba political group called *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, and it sparked ethnic tensions.

The Yorubas retaliated by forming their own news organization, the *Daily Service*, to rectify the errors in those remarks. To avoid disputes in the future, each news company adopted self and tailored its message to the wishes of the local leaders. The *Tribune*, for example, is more attentive while discussing Yoruba issues, whereas the Kaduna-based *New Nigerian* thoroughly evaluated northern perspective on national topics. Because they dominate the majority of media-rich territories in the country, including the country's largest city, the Yorubas have the most influence over the news, but self censorship was a principle they had to abide by in order not to heat the polity. While newspapers still represent the interests of various ethnic groups nowadays, self censorship is still enforced by the various media outlets in order not to run fowl of the law.

The government began an operation to seize control of the press in 1961. It all started with the seizing of the *Morning Post's* headquarters, a well-known and influential news organization in Lagos. The government then exerted such strict control over the paper that it eventually went out of business and was shut down in 1972.

As the government's grip over the press grew after the loss of the *Morning Post*, other newspapers followed suit. Although many news organizations have gone out of business as a result of government manipulation, others, such as the *Daily Times of Nigeria*, survived and continue to operate despite being under government control in 1977, until it was privately acquired.

The new Nigerian Constitution of 1999 guaranteed freedom of expression. Defamation laws, on the other hand, were enacted later.



Critics argue that, while press freedom measures have improved, there is still potential for improvement. In the Freedom of the Press 2011 report published by Freedom House, Nigeria was classified as partly free.

### **1.3.2 Military Censorship**

Due to allegations of vote manipulation and electoral malpractice, the Second Republic's power was challenged in 1983. As a result, the newly elected administration opted to delegate censorship to the military. This afforded writers some amount of freedom from persecution in hands of the military, especially when it was known that generals don't read novels. For instance, when a student named Oherei published a novel called "Behind the Iron Curtain," he was arrested and accused of being a communist sympathizer. But two days after his arrest, he was acquitted. However, censorship role was returned to the federal government after the Second Republic was overthrown on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1983. Military censorship was still in effect in 2013 for information about military strategy and confidential materials for security reasons.

## **1.4 Electronic Media and Entertainment Censorship**

The government established the Nigerian News Agency (NAN) in 1978, which was in charge of censoring electronic media such as radio, television, and DVD. Although the majority of electronic media was owned by private companies, the government was able to influence content through the NAN.

The National Film and Video Censors Board took over as the government's official schedule agency in June 1994, replacing the NAN. It is in charge of approving film producers and reviewing their work based on the following criteria: educational and entertainment value; national security sensitivity; avoidance of blasphemy, obscenity and criminality; avoidance of inciting religious and racial conflict; avoidance of violence and corruption; and avoidance of disrespecting African personalities. *I Hate My Village* was prohibited by the National Film and Video Censors Board owing to its depiction of cannibalism. *Omo Empire*, *Outcast 1 and 2*, *Shattered Home*, and *Night Out (Girls for Sale)* were all banned by the board in 2002 because they harmed every known decent and noble tendency of the African psyche and culture by depicting obscene acts among young women in certain cuts of the film.

### **1.4.1 Television Censorship**

Despite the fact that the government regulates electronic media through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), which is in charge of monitoring and regulating broadcast media, there is no evidence that the

government controls the media. Local television stations must limit foreign programming to 40% of their programming, while satellite transmission must limit foreign content to 20%. The ban on live broadcasts of foreign news and programming imposed by NBC in 2004 is still in effect, however it does not apply to international cable or satellite services.

### **1.4.2 Internet Censorship**

In 2012, several government-critical Internet news sites experienced server problems, which the site owners blamed on government interference. Typically, such outages lasted a few hours.

Twitter was banned in Nigeria on June 5, 2021, after the service erased and suspended President Muhammadu Buhari's account for breaking its abuse rules and threatening the separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra, which had used the Nigerian Civil War as a subject. Buhari slammed the actions for intruding on his right to free expression. Using Twitter was then made a criminal offense until January 2022.

### **Self-Assessment Exercises 4**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. What does censorship in Nigeria entail?</li> <li>ii. Describe press, military, internet censorship in Nigeria.</li> </ul> |
|---|

## **1.5 History of National Film and Video Censors Board**

Act 85 of 1993 established the National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) as the official regulatory body for the Nigerian film and video industry.

### **1.5.1 The NFVCB's Role in the Nigerian Film Industry**

The National Film Video Censors Board was established by Act No.85 of 1993 to oversee the Nigerian film and video industry. By legislation, the Board has the authority to classify all films and videos, whether they are imported or created locally. The Board is also responsible for registering all film and video outlets across the country and maintaining a database of such outlets, among other things.

#### **1.5.2.1 The Board's Functions**

The Board's functions includes: licensing a person to exhibit films and video works, licensing a premises for the purpose of exhibiting films and video works, censoring and classifying films and video works; regulating

and prescribing safety precautions to be observed in licensed premises; regulating and controlling cinematographic exhibitions; and performing any other functions that are necessary or expedient. As a result of the Board's founding, it is now able to evaluate, classify, and register films and video works, as well as monitor the films and film outlets across the country.

Additional action items identified by the Board as priority intervention mechanisms include: organizing training programs focusing on new content development, with the goal of institutionalizing international best practices in film production.

Organize worldwide conferences on the impact of film categorization and censorship on society and development.

To restructure the sector and ensure that more independent producers have access to the market, draft and successfully implement a new national distribution policy.

To assist filmmakers, establish new censorship and classification criteria, as well as professionalize the NFVCB's activities.

It ensures broader community acceptance and confidence in categorization judgments by regulating and prescribing safety requirements to be observed in licensed premises.

The Censor's Board also increase monitoring and enforcement efforts to prevent the release of such films without NFVCB permission and it imposes severe penalties for such transgressions.

The board creates incentives for the production of positive-themed films, such as advance production subsidies, reduced censorship fees for advocacy films and so on.

### **1.5.3 Involvement of the NFVCB**

The NFVCB sees its role as the industry regulator as beneficial to the growth of a viable film industry. The Board launched the 'Nigeria in the Movies' campaign to support this claim (NIM). It is a signature program that solves the shortcomings in the film business through forward-thinking initiatives based on the Board's mandate and vision.

The Board states that Nigeria's identity, character, image, and influence should all be defined through the lens of the cinema. The vision is in line with the Heart of Africa Project and Rebranding Nigeria programs, and it

portrays Nigeria as the most powerful force of global goodwill and influence.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 5

iii.	What are the core objectives of NFVCB?
iii.	State the criteria for licencing of films by NFVCB.

### 1.6 Summary

The NFVCB's Core Objectives are to create an enabling climate for the film industry's growth, keep the classification system on track in terms of time, cost, and quality; supply governments with policy, advice and services, increase present and new clients' trust in the NFVCB classification system, improve the community's understanding, confidence, and use of classification systems and results. It also helps to provide the necessary internal capacity in the areas of people, training, logistical support, information, financial resources, and leadership to enable NFVCB management and staff to achieve their goals.

The NFVCB's Role in the Nigerian Film Industry is to oversee the Nigerian film and video industry. By legislation, the Board has the authority to classify all films and videos, whether they are imported or created locally. The Board is also responsible for registering all film and video outlets across the country and maintaining a database of such outlets, among other things.

The Board's functions include: licensing a person to exhibit films and video works, licensing a premises for the purpose of exhibiting films and video works, censoring and classifying films and video works; regulating and prescribing safety precautions to be observed in licensed premises; regulating and controlling cinematographic exhibitions; and performing any other functions that are necessary or expedient. As a result of the Board's founding, it is now able to evaluate, classify, and register films and video works, as well as monitor the films and film outlets across the country.

### 1.7 Glossary

- Boycott: Withdraw from
- Blasphemy: The act of speaking against God or sacred things.
- Inciting religion: Using religious speech to stir up emotion of hatred, violence or unlawful behaviour
- Cannibalism: The act of consuming another individual of the same specie as food.

- Logistic support: Providing assistance
- Cinematographic: The technology of motion picture photography

### 1.8 References/Further Readings

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### 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content

#### Answers to Question 4

- i. The Nigerian government has maintained influence over the media for much of the country's history, to the present time. Furthermore, between 1979 and 1983, the government of the Second Nigerian Republic delegated censorship to the military for a brief while. Nigerian censors frequently target certain types of ideas, such as ethnic debates, political opposition, and moral ambiguity.
- a. Although the new Nigerian Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression in 1999. Defamation laws, on the other hand, were enacted later. Critics argue that, while press freedom measures have improved, there is still potential for improvement. In the Freedom of the Press 2011 report published by Freedom House, Nigeria was classified as partly free.
- b. Military censorship is not much of a serious affair. In fact, writers felt safe from persecution at the hands of the military, especially when it was known that generals don't read novels. When a student named Oherei published a novel called "Behind the Iron Curtain," he was jailed and accused of being a communist sympathizer. Two days after his arrest, he was acquitted.
- c. In 2012, several government-critical Internet news sites experienced server problems, which the site owners blamed on government interference. Typically, such outages lasted a few hours.

Twitter was banned in Nigeria on June 5, 2021, after the service erased and suspended President Muhammadu Buhari's account for breaking its abuse rules and threatening the separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra, which had used the Nigerian Civil War as a subject. Buhari slammed the actions for intruding on his right to free expression. Since then, using Twitter has been made a criminal offense until January 2022.

#### Answers to Question 5

- i. The core objectives of NFVCB are to:
  - a. create an enabling climate for the film industry's growth.
  - b. keep the classification system on track in terms of time, cost, and quality.
  - c. supply governments with policy advice and services.
  - d. increase present and new clients' trust in (and use of) the NFVCB classification system.
  - e. improve the community's understanding, confidence, and use of classification systems and results.
  - f. provide the necessary internal capacity in the areas of people, training, logistical support, information, financial resources, and

leadership to enable NFVCB management and staff to achieve their goals.

- ii. The Board's functions include:
  - licensing a person to exhibit films and video works,
  - licensing a premises for the purpose of exhibiting films and video works,
  - censoring and classifying films and video works;
  - regulating and prescribing safety precautions to be observed in licensed premises; regulating and controlling cinematographic exhibitions;
  - performing any other functions that are necessary or expedient.

As a result of the Board's founding, it is now able to evaluate, classify, and register films and video works, as well as monitor the films and film outlets across the country.

It organises training programs focusing on new content development, with the goal of institutionalizing international best practices in film production.

It runs worldwide conferences on the impact of film categorization and censorship on society and development.

It is also working towards restructuring the sector and ensuring that more independent producers have access to the market, draft and successfully implement a new national distribution policy.

The board assists filmmakers, to establish new censorship and classification criteria, as well as professionalize the NFVCB's activities.

It ensures broader community acceptance and confidence in its categorization judgments by regulating and prescribing safety requirements to be observed in licensed premises and imposes severe penalties for such transgressions.

Finally, it creates incentives for the production of positive-themed films, such as advance production subsidies and reduction in censorship fees for advocacy films.

## UNIT 3 CENSORSHIP AND THE CINEMA

### Unit Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcome
- 3.3 Film censorship
  - 3.3.1 Reason for Film Censorship
- 3.4 History of Film Censorship in the United States
  - 3.4.1 The Race Factor
- 3.5 Film Censorship in America and UK
  - 1.5.1 Film Censorship in the United Kingdom
  - 3.5.2 The Development of Censorship Ratings
  - 3.5.3 Censorship Rating
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings

### 3.1 Introduction

This unit gives a clear overview of what film censorship entails, it delves into the history of how the concept of censorship of films evolved in the United Kingdom and the United States. It also discusses ratings and what the logos on films indicate and the criteria for the categorisation.

### 3.2 Learning Outcome

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe film censorship,
- state the need for censorship,
- describe film rating,
- evaluate film based on rating.

### 1.3 Film censorship

Censorship in cinema can be defined as the suppression of any audio, visual, or spoken material in films that could be deemed unsuitable, inflammatory, disparaging, disgusting, damaging, or distressing. Censorship varies widely between countries and is carried out in a variety of ways. The grounds for banning a film or censoring particular parts are numerous and include, sex, violence, and substance misuse; political or religious reasons, animal cruelty, and so on.

#### 1.3.1 Reason for Film Censorship

Extreme violence and sexual content must be kept out of the mainstream media. This is legitimate censorship that does not jeopardize our political freedom of speech rights.



To safeguard youngsters, certain restriction is permitted. Governments say that they are the only ones capable of safeguarding children from vulgar materials, resulting in the worst entertainment. They must adopt stringent measures at the censorship board to entirely ban movies that are a threat to a country's culture, as well as examine books, movies, television, periodicals, radio, and internet sites.

When filmmaking emerged from its experimental stage in the early years of the twentieth century, most silent films, such as Jules Verne's *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, contained depictions of familiar topics of that era. Most silent films contained renderings of then-familiar themes, such as Jules Verne's film or depictions of religious leaders or educational issues, when filmmaking emerged from its experimental period in the early years of the twentieth century.

Burglaries, railroad robberies, and a stolen kiss in a shoe store grew increasingly dangerous to the old cultural elites as the issues became riskier. The fact that young people were congregating in dark, crowded theatres rather than well-lit churches or lecture halls alarmed the supporters of refined culture, particularly among the elder generation. Some, such as Jane Addams, a well-known social reformer, were concerned that the corrupt art of cinema was displacing authentic drama, which was required to satisfy the desire for a better vision of life. According to Addams, if young people only forecast their rose-coloured future in a house of dreams, society would be doomed to a scepticism of life's worth.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 6

- |     |                              |
|-----|------------------------------|
| i.  | What is film censorship?     |
| ii. | Why is censorship necessary? |

### 1.4 History of Film Censorship in the United States

One of the major trigger of censorship was the carnival atmosphere and sexually explicit music and dances common in movie districts. The showdown took place in New York on Christmas Day, 1908, when the mayor cancelled the permits of 540 motion picture after hearing from religious groups that money made from films were actually profit made from the corruption of the minds of young people. Similar action were carried out by other city mayors. As a result, movie theatre owners established a group and filed a lawsuit against the city. The moralists lost the first round on January 7, 1909, when the courts declared that the

mayors lacked the authority to close all cinema theatres, despite the fact that acceptable fire and indecency laws might be applied.

#### **1.4.1 The Race Factor**

Another factor that triggered film censorship was the race factor. It was the general belief that African Americans were second class citizens who should not be heard but seen. Blacks usually had minor roles of, domestic staff, such as gardeners, maid, etc. But when the social outcasts were being seen as super heroes in films, it did not go down well with the moralists and so riots broke out based on their perception of blacks overstepping the social order. For example, in 1912, the U.S. Congress had to ban all boxing films, because of race riots in most cities of the U.S, which resulted in the death of eight people, after the film shows of the first African-American heavyweight boxing champion, Jack Johnson winning the title in a 1910 match. The fact that he beat James Jeffries, a white boxer who was described as the “great white hope” did not go down well with the whites.

#### **1.5 Film Censorship in America and UK**

Film censorship, or the control of a cinema's content and presentation, has existed in the film industry for almost as long as it has existed. The activists of today's society continue to expand the film industry's First Amendment rights, allowing the art to be controlled to a certain extent. In truth, film censorship was established in the United Kingdom in 1912, and the United States followed a decade later. The Hays Code of 1922 and the Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 were two other early attempts to restrict the cinema industry.

##### **1.5.1 Film Censorship in the United Kingdom**

Video nasty list was created in 1982 to protect against obscenity. Films on this list were banned and distributors of the said films were liable to be prosecuted. This list banned 74 films at one point in the mid-1980s; the list was eventually trimmed down, and only 39 films were successfully prosecuted. Most of the films (even of the 39 successfully prosecuted) have now been approved by the BBFC, cut or uncut (Video Recordings Act, 1984).

##### **1.5.2 The Development of Censorship Ratings**

In the United States, there is no federal agency in the United States that is responsible for allowing or prohibiting motion picture exhibition. The majority of film bans were enacted through city or state ordinances or proclamations. Some films have been deemed obscene by a court and are

subject to particular regulations prohibiting the distribution of such content such as child pornography. In most cases, such rulings are only legally binding in the jurisdiction of the court that made the decision. That is the film could be shown in other states apart from the state where such film was banned.

It is possible for separate censorship standard to apply in most states because, in order to avoid the development of a federal censoring agency, the established film industry in the United States adopted a kind of self-censorship known as the Motion Picture Production Code in the late 1920s. The code prohibits criminal from ever winning in film. Also, partial nudity, steamy sex scenes and homosexuality were not allowed. The code survived numerous court challenges until the 1960s. But, as a product of its times, the code did not talk about stopping racism or discrimination against Jews.

The Production Code was replaced by the film industry when it formed the Motion Pictures Production and Distributors Association in 1922. It metamorphosed into the Motion Picture Association of America in 1945 and the association formed the MPAA film rating system in 1968. The rating system is divided into five categories, each with its own description. G (General Audiences; All Ages Accepted), PG (Parental Guidance Suggested; Some Materials May Not Be Appropriate for Children), PG-13 (Parents Strongly Cautioned; Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13), R (Restricted; Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian), and NC-17 (No Child Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian) (No one under 17 admitted). It was established in 1968 by Jack Valenti. In addition to film ratings, the MPAA lobby's Congress, assists in the foreign promotion of the US film business, and protects against piracy.

### **1.5.3 Censorship Rating**

The government controls censorship and rating boards in most countries. The purpose of film censoring is believed to be to shield youngsters from adult content. A motion picture rating system is used to categorize films according to their suitability for audiences in terms of sex, violence, substance abuse, vulgarity, impudence, and other forms of obscene content. A certification, classification, or certificate is a term used to describe a certain issued rating.

The criteria for films ratings are as follows:

G – General Audience

PG – Parental Guidance

PG-13 – Not for kids under the age of 13

R – Restricted

NC-17 – No Children 17 or Under Admitted

### Self-Assessment Exercises 7

- i. Censorship rating is.....
- ii. List the film rating criteria.....
- ii. .... coined the present usage of ‘media’ in .....

## 1.6 Summary

Censorship in cinema can be defined as the suppression of any audio, visual, or spoken material in films that could be deemed unsuitable, inflammatory, disparaging, disgusting, damaging, or distressing. Reasons for censorship are extreme violence and sexual content which needed to be kept out of the mainstream media.

Censorship has its origin in the carnival atmosphere and sexually explicit music and dances common in movie districts which were a more direct source of conflict. The showdown took place in New York on Christmas Day, 1908, when the mayor cancelled the permits of 540 motion picture theatres after hearing from religious groups that movies included “profit from the corrupting of children's minds.” Film censorship was established in the United Kingdom in 1912, and the United States followed a decade later. The Hays Code of 1922 and the Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 were two other early attempts to restrict the cinema industry.

## 1.7 Glossary

Video nasty: Low budget horror pornographic film

Disparage: Regard as being of little worth.

Jeopardise: To put something or someone into a situation in which there is danger of loss or failure.

Vulgar: Lacking sophistication or good taste

Stringent: Strict, Precise, Exacting

Lobby: Seek to influence

Impudence: Insulting, Rude, Saucy

## 1.8 References/Further Readings

**1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content**

## Answer to Question 6

- i. Censorship in cinema can be defined as the suppression of any audio, visual, or spoken material in films that could be deemed unsuitable, inflammatory, disparaging, disgusting, damaging, or distressing. Censorship varies widely between countries and is carried out in a variety of ways.
- ii. Censorship is necessary to safeguard youngsters and prevent unrest within the country.

## Answer to Question 7

- iii. A motion picture rating system is the categorization of films according to their suitability for audiences in terms of sex, violence, substance abuse, vulgarity, impudence, and other forms of obscene content.
- iv. The criteria for films are ratings are as follows:
  - a. G – General Audience
  - b. PG – Parental Guidance
  - c. PG-13 – Not for kids under the age of 13
  - d. R – Restricted
  - e. NC-17 – No Children 17 or Under Admitted

## MODULE 3

Unit 1	Censored Films
Unit 2	Culture And Censorship
Unit 3	Moral Responsibility In Artistic Expression

### UNIT 1 CENSORED FILMS

#### Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Censored Films all over the world
  - 1.3.1 Banned Films
    - 1.3.2 Films Banned for Religious/Racial Reasons
    - 1.3.3 Films Banned for Obscenity
    - 1.1.1.1 Films Banned in Communist Countries
    - 1.3.1.4 Banned for Violence
      - 1.3.1.5 Banned for Blasphemy by Pakistani Government
- 1.4 Changing Film Attitudes and Perspectives
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings
- 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content

#### 1.1 Introduction

Censorship by Country is a compilation of data on censorship, internet censorship, press freedom, freedom of expression, and human rights in each country and presents it in a sortable form with further details. You may even be able to analyse and rationalise if the individual bans were justified.

#### 1.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Review banned films,
- Categorise the banned films based on their types,
- Evaluate the censorship of film in the present time.

#### 1.3 Censored Films all over the world

Censorship is a known word in the global film industry. It is a fairly common thing for films to be banned, so film producers try as much as

possible to remove offensive contents from their work, to avoid unpleasantness.

### **1.3.1 Banned Films**

The reasons for banning films differ from one country to the other. At times, most countries may ban films for obscenity, religion, race and on political grounds. Some may even ban films for unknown reasons. Most countries often have common grounds for censorship in cases of obscenity. At times, part(s) of the film may be censored and in such an instance, the producers may be asked to cut out such scenes before the film will be allowed for viewership. We even have cases of films being unbanned after a while. The under listed are banned films in the world and the reason for the censor.

### **1.3.2 Films Banned for Religious/Racial Reasons**

*Ben Hur* was banned by all Arab League States because Haya Harareet was a Jewess.

*Exodus* was banned in UAE because Paul Newman supports Zionism.

*Wonder Woman* was banned in Lebanon because Gal Gadot was a former Israeli soldier.

*Hostage(Azerbaijani)* was banned because it presented Armenia in a positive light.

*Noah* was banned by Islamic nations because their religion forbids the acting or portrayal of the personality of prophets in films.

### **1.3.4 Films Banned for Obscenity**

Obscenity is a vast term used to describing indecent materials in films. For something to be termed obscene, it must have made indecent exposure of parts of the body that would normally be kept private or covered or made indecent or lewd remarks.

The following films were banned for obscenity.

*The Silence*

*The Last Tango in Paris*

*Pretty Baby*

*Looking for Mr Goodbar*

*A Clockwork Orange*

*Maladolescenza*

### 1.3.5 Films Banned in Communist Countries

*The Funeral Ceremonies*

*The Cremator*

*Nahota(Naked)*

*Carnival Scenes*

*Gone with the Wind*

*The Godfather*

#### 1.3.1.4 Banned for Violence

*I Spit on Your Grave*

*Ikki Touden: Dragon Destiny*

*Megan is Missing*(Banned for Sexual Violence)

*A Serbian Film* (Banned for sexual violence )

#### 1.3.1.5 Banned for Blasphemy by Pakistani Government

*Agent Vinod*

*Sarabjit*

*Maalik*

### 1.4 Changing Film Attitudes and Perspectives

The way movies are restricted these days reflects a shift in society's attitude toward sex and violence. 'The Wild One,' a 1953 film about a motorcycle gang harassing a town in the United States was prohibited because it was thought to set a terrible example for the youth. The prohibition lasted fourteen years. It has now been given the PG rating.

Who decides, is the question that needs to be examined. Few people would argue that censorship helps to sustain society's moral standards. The counter-argument is that why should the values of a small group of individuals be imposed on the rest of the population. Will censorship of films reduce crime, violence, and rape?

The majority of people's opinions on censorship are context-dependent. The American film 'The Cooler,' about a casino employee and his girlfriend, was rated NC-17 for a love scene in which actress Maria Bello's genitals were briefly visible, whereas 'Scary Movie' was rated R for a scene in which a serial killer stabs a woman in the chest and removes her breast implants.

While the issue about a small group of people eliminating access to entertainment and information for a wide audience is still on going, there



are numerous aspects to censorship. Keeping up with the rapid advancement of technology is one of the most important concerns with classification today. A film board can ban a film like *The Human Centipede 2*, but people can still watch it online; censorship is a necessary evil in the realm of cinema because of its multifarious nature.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 8

- i. What is racial censorship?
- ii. List and explain the instances of racial and religion, obscenity, communism or dictatorial censorship of films.

### 1.6 Summary

Censorship by Country is a compilation of data on censorship, internet censorship, press freedom, freedom of expression, and human rights in different countries and presented in a sortable form with details.

The way movies are restricted these days reflects a shift in society's attitude toward sex and violence. This is because, films that were previously banned may be released for viewership, based on difference in the level of societal perception of the matter, after a while.

A few people would argue that censorship helps to sustain society's moral standards. The counter-argument is that why should the values of a small group of individuals be imposed on the rest of the population. Will censorship of films reduce crime, violence, and rape?

### 1.7 Glossary

Prohibition: Forbidding or banning by the law.

Values: The importance, worth or usefulness of something.

Multifarious: Many or various types

### 1.8 References/Further Readings

Green, Jonathon; Karolides, Nicholas J. (14 May 2014). Encyclopedia of Censorship. ISBN9781438110011. Retrieved 2015-02-16.

'Lebanon officially bans 'Wonder Woman'. Page Six. Associated Press. 1 June 2017. Retrieved 3 June 2017.

'Tunisian court bans showing of 'Wonder Woman' over Gal Gadot's IDF service-TRENDING STORIES-Jerusalem Post'. www.jpost.com.

'Beyond the Interview': A short list of films banned for political reasons. LA Times. 2014-12-23. Retrieved 2016-01-11.

### 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content

Answers to Exercise 8

- i. Racial censorship is the suppression or ban based on the race or tribe of an individual involved in the film. For example, all Arab League banned the film *Ben Hur* because Harareet was Jew.
- ii a. Films banned based on religion/racial censorship:

*Ben Hur* was banned by the Arab League, because Hayarat was Jew.  
*Exodus* was banned in U.A.E. because Paul Newman supports Zionism.  
*Wonder Woman* was banned in Lebanon because Gal Gadot was a former Israeli soldier.  
*Noah* was banned by the Arab League due to depiction of the prophets.

- b. Films banned for obscenity:
  - (i) *The Silence*,
  - (ii) *Last Tango in Paris*,
  - (iii) *Pretty Baby*,
  - (iv) *Ken Park*,
  - (v) *A clockwork Orange*.
- a. Films banned in Communist/dictatorship countries
  - (i) *The Great Dictator* (1940),
  - (ii) *Las largas vacaciones del'36*,
  - (iii) *The Last Days of Musolini* 1974
  - (iv) *The Wolf of the Wall Street* (banned for putting Cambodia in a negative light.)

Others are the *Dull Sunday*, *The Cremator*, *All My Compatriots* etc. (banned by the Czchoslovakia goverment).

## UNIT 2 CULTURE AND CENSORSHIP

### Unit Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Outcomes
- 1.4 The Human Culture
  - 2.3.1 Elements of Culture
  - 2.3.2 Cultural Relativism
- 2.4 Film Censorship and Culture
  - 2.4.1 The Effect of Film Censorship on Culture
- 1.5 Cultural Reconciliation
  - 2.5.1 Cultural Accommodation in Film Censorship
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References/Further Readings
- 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

### 2.1 Introduction

This unit is a discussion on the conflict between censorship and culture. It dwelt on the limiting effect of censorship on cultural expression and its effect on culture and the people. It also proffers solution based on the principle of cultural relativism as a way of curbing excesses on film censorship. Finally, it discussed the need to reconcile differences in culture by the reconciliation of cultural differences through understanding and adaptation of noticed differences.

### 2.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define culture,
- analyse cultural element,
- evaluate censorship in film,
- do a critique of film censorship and
- synthesize differences in culture.

### 2.3 The Human Culture

The human culture is a pattern of human behaviour in a society or group that is associated with that particular group of people with peculiar identifiable feature that is relevant to the said group. The human culture embodies the customs, social standard, dressing, tradition, art, architectural style and laws. Culture was declared as the fourth pillar of sustainable development by UNESCO in 2010.

### 2.3.1 Elements of Culture

The elements of the culture of a society is the summation of its whole being because a people's culture defines it. Cultural elements encompasses religion, entertainment, arts, mode of dressing, games, arts made up of the literal, visual and performing art.

Visual art aspect of culture includes architecture, sculpture, photography, film, painting etc.

Performing art includes music, dance, film, theatre, etc.

Sports are competitive arrangement designed for the purpose of enjoyment and they include wrestling, dancing competition etc.

Dressing: The people's culture includes their clothing, jewelleries, hairstyle and other accessories.

### 2.3.2 Cultural Relativism

The principle of cultural relativism states that no culture is superior to the other since there is no known yardstick for determining the superiority or inferiority of one culture to the other. That is, there is no known good or bad values, everything is determined at the societal level. The rule of cultural relativism states that rather than rejecting or castigating a particular culture, one should seek to understand the culture or get information on why they relate as they do. A group or community should not use the standard of their culture to judge or determine the acceptance of another culture. This concept can best be explained by the way people approach different food or recipes from other culture, because it has been observed that there is more cultural tolerance all over the world with regards to food.

#### Self-Assessment Exercises 9

- i. Human culture is.....?
- ii. State the elements of human culture with examples.
- iii. Describe the principle of cultural relativism?

### 2.4 Film Censorship and Culture

Films are the projections of values, traditional belief, attitude, arts etc., which are all embedded in different cultures. But, contrary to cultural

relativism, censorship tends to superimpose the belief of a dominant culture on other people's culture. Meaning that the dominant culture, with time squeezes out other cultures that are disagreeable to its own expectation of what the ideal culture should be. That is, it often disregards other people's belief and forces another culture on them over time, thus erasing the tradition, values, way of life of others or the entire people's culture in any area it finds disagreeable.

#### **2.4.1 The Effect of Film Censorship on Culture**

The imposition of a preferred way of life on film producers have often resulted in producers being forced to cut out some scenes, alter the story line or the removal of a particular actor or total ban on the film in its entirety. When the media is controlled through censorship, it limits people's access to information about any other culture apart from their own. In such a situation, the people will not be objective and will not accept other countries culture. For example, the Walt Disney Company changed the storyline of the little mermaid from the original ending intended by the author. The company apparently diffused the initial story to protect the sensibility of children in the name of censorship. The change, apart from being unoriginal was an attack on culture. Another popular attack on culture was the two inch plaster cast of David fixed on the nude sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum because of the culture shock experienced by Queen Victoria, when she was presented with the statue. So, rather than try to understand what the statue depicted; part of it was covered up with the tall leaf when the royals visit the museum. Thus, reducing or watering down the intended message.



Michelangelo's David 1912

### Self-Assessment Exercises 10

- i. State the conflicting issue between cultural relativism and film censorship?
- ii. What are the effects of film censorship on culture.

## 2.5 Cultural Reconciliation

The principle of cultural reconciliation should be adopted in film assessment. Globalization dictates the need to identify the cultural differences that may exist between one's home country and the country where the film was produced. Where the differences exist, the other culture should not be seen as being deficient, instead, a decision could be reached on the aspect of the new culture to be adopted, if there is need for it and to what extent the home-country practices may be adapted to accommodate the foreign culture projected. It has however been discovered that usually, the differences are not really noticeable or of much importance. It is very easy to learn some facets of a human culture such as greetings, consciously. But other differences are learnt without being prompted to do so. When cultures learn to tolerate people of other cultures, most of the issues in censorship will be viewed with a better perspective and there will be less arbitrariness in censorship.

### 2.5.1 Cultural Accommodation in Film Censorship

Before censoring a film, it will greatly help all concerned if there can be room for objective assessment of the culture that forms the plot of the film. This can be done through research and extensive dialogue about the film in question. During debates, different view points must be given proper assessment before a decision is taken on the film. When there are divergent views on a film culture, it makes for easier reconciliation as some opinions will have to shift for a meeting point to be reached.

#### Self-Assessment Exercises 11

- i. What does the principle of cultural reconciliation propose in film assessment?
- ii. Objective assessment of films can be done through  
.....

### 2.6 Summary

Culture is a pattern of human behaviour in a society or group that is associated with that particular group of people with peculiar identifiable feature which is relevant to the said group.

Cultural elements encompasses religion, entertainment, arts, mode of dressing, games, arts, made up of the literal, visual and performing art.

Censorship tends to superimpose the belief of a dominant culture on other people's culture. Meaning that the dominant culture, with time squeezes out other culture that are disagreeable to its own expectation of what the ideal culture should be.

The imposition of a preferred way of life on film producers have often resulted in producers being forced to cut out some scenes, alter the story line or the removal of a particular actor or total ban on the film in its entirety. When the media is controlled through censorship, it limits people's access to information about any other culture apart from their own.

The principle of cultural relativism states that no culture is superior to the other since there is no known yardstick for determining the superiority or inferiority of one culture to the other. That is, there is no known good or bad values, everything is determined at the societal level. The rule of cultural relativism states that rather than rejecting or castigating a



particular culture, one should seek to understand the culture or get information on why they relate as they do.

Where the differences exist, the other culture should not be seen as being deficient, instead, a decision could be reached on the aspect of the new culture to be adopted, if there is need for it and to what extent the home-country practices may be adapted to accommodate the foreign culture projected.

## **2.7 Glossary**

Peculiar: Different

Literal: Exact, without exaggeration

Sculpture: A statue made with stone wood or other material

Visual: Seeing

Imposition: Unwelcome demand or burden.

Reconciliation: Making ones view compatible to others

## **2.8 References/Further Readings**

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### 1.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content

#### Exercise 9.

- i. The human culture is a pattern of human behaviour in a society that is peculiar to a group of people with distinct identifiable feature that is relevant to the said group.
- ii. The elements of the culture of a society is the summation of its whole being because a people's culture defines it. Cultural elements encompasses religion, entertainment, arts, mode of dressing, games, arts made up of the literal, visual and performing art.  
Visual art aspect of culture includes architecture, sculpture, photography, film, painting etc.
- iii. The principle of cultural relativism states that no culture is superior to the other since there is no known yardstick for determining the superiority or inferiority of one culture to the other. The rule of cultural relativism states that rather than rejecting or castigating a particular culture, one should seek to understand the culture or get information on why they relate as they do. That is, a group or community should not use the standard of their culture to judge or determine the acceptability of another culture. This concept can best be explained by the way people approach different food or recipes from other culture, because it has been observed that there is more cultural tolerance all over the world with regards to food.

#### Answer to question 10

- i. Censorship in films is all about the removal of disagreeable contents from films, but cultural relativism states that there is no good or bad culture, the matter is a subjective one. Cultural relativism advocates that strange things in films should be approached with the same type of enthusiasm we exhibit when we come across strange food. That is we should try to understand strange culture, rather than condemn it.
- ii. The imposition of a preferred way of life on film producers have often, altered the story line or resulted in the removal of a particular actor or total ban on the film in its entirety.
  - b. It reduces people's access to information about any other culture apart from their own.
  - c. In such a situation, the people will not be objective and will not accept any other culture, apart from their own.

#### Exercise 11

- i. The principle of cultural reconciliation states that differences in culture should be accommodated. The other culture should not be seen as being deficient, instead, a decision should be reached on the aspect of the new culture to be adopted, if there is need for it

- and to what extent the home-country practices may be adapted to accommodate the foreign culture projected.
- ii. Objective assessment of films can be done through research and extensive discussion about the film in question.

## **UNIT 3 MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**

### **Unit Structure**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Communication Ethics
- 3.4 The Principles of Ethical Communication
- 3.5 Universal Codes of Communication Ethics
  - 3.5.1 Ethics in Film Making
  - 3.5.2 Decisions Making with the Subject
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.8 References/Further Readings
- 3.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

### **3.3 Introduction**

Censorship in films is a concept that brings the issue of moral responsibility in artistic expression to the fore. Every individual or artist or actor should always consider the ethical aspect of whatever speech or output they intend to showcase. A journalist should ask himself: 'is it moral, will it be acceptable to all' before making any output or production. Being ethical in speech means using language, media and journalism to create relationships that are based on ones morals and values. It means, being fair, honest, truthful, respecting other people's believe and respecting their position.

Ethical communication is crucial due to its emphasis on the responsibility of people to keep society civil. With the concern of obscenity and other disagreeable content in films becoming more prevalent in today's society, the importance of ethical communication is now crucial in films and documentaries.

### **3.4 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this unit, you will have

- a clear understanding of ethics,
- synthesize ethical rules into production,
- determine the attitude to project.

### **3.3 Communication Ethics**

Ethical communication is closely linked to the personality of the communicator. Ethical communication is an accurate and truthful exchange that is based on the morals and the values of the communicators

(Higgins, 2015). In film making, the values of the producer is what is shared with the audience.

Communication ethics is of great importance to professionals, businesses, corporation and individuals. Ethical communication in an organisation makes for effective businesses practices. An organisation with ethical practice will immediately issue a press statement in case of something that may be injurious to health but one with unethical practice will rather bury the information in order to amass wealth. The goodwill demonstrated through transparency will encourage trust and good faith, that the effective business will not conceal what is in the interest of its audience. Censorship may be the most effective business practice, especially in keeping trade secrets, and in maintaining high moral standard with regards to the quality of production. A method of production or system of operation may be kept from the public to maintain an edge. A business may use social media to advertise, but the social media service provider may restrain its users on some aspect. That is, it is the social responsibility of a subscriber that uses the social media for advertisement to accept the censorship terms of the social media provider.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 12

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| i. | What is communication ethics?          |
| ii | How does censorship feature in ethics? |

### 3.4 The Principles of Ethical Communication

Ethics give occupational and professional directions on how to distribute information to the public without giving room for offence. Its main focus is on giving credence to available information and being ethical in its management. Ethics state that one should:

1. Always seek to bring out the best in communications and interactions with other group members.
2. Listen and not interrupt when others speak and avoid side conversation.
3. One should always speak with discretion.
4. Speak from your own experience and perspective, expressing your own thoughts, needs, and feelings.
5. Always try to understand others
6. Manage your own personal boundaries: share only what you are comfortable sharing and give due regard to the personal boundaries of others.
7. Everyone should be given fair hearing.

### Self-Assessment Exercises 13

List five principles governing ethical communication.

### 3.5 Universal Codes of Communication Ethics

Universal codes of professional communication states that unethical communication can disrupt peaceful co-existence in the society and civility in human exchange. National Communication Association advocates honest communication with emphasis on educating others in effective dialogue, discussion, as well as debate.

Truth and confidentiality are an ethical terms that apply to everyone and all professions and governs relationships and all human interactions. The most important thing is do away with unnecessary embellishment, be truthful always, avoid anything that could lead to distress or pain, and to be free of undue influence, not answerable to anyone.

#### 3.5.1 Ethics in Film Making

This concept can be discussed from the angle of the producer, actor and the content of the film itself. A film, while being a projection of the attitude and values of the producer, must also obey some ground rules of ethical conduct.

The ethics of fictional films have been taken care of by the MPA Ratings. But, the principles governing documentary filmmaking covers the duties of the film producer to the subjects of the film, the society in question, and the viewers, especially when other people's stories are being told.

Two types of partnerships were highlighted by the filmmakers as raising ethical concerns: 1) The filmmaker with the subject(s); 2) the filmmaker with the audience. Documentary film makers prefers to have an informal commitment at the outset with the subject on release, they then allow the situation on ground to determine how they handle the production.

#### 3.5.2 Decisions Making with the Subject

Because they are aware of a power imbalance, filmmakers will sometimes volunteer to share decision-making power with some subjects. This approach, however, does not apply to superstars, who usually have able staff to protect their image. This distinction reflects filmmakers' awareness of the power imbalance in the relationship.

The majority of the subjects signed releases early in the production process, giving the filmmakers complete editorial control and ownership of the material for any and all uses. Insurers, whose insurance is required

for most television airings and theatrical distribution, frequently determine the terms of these releases. Because the terms of these releases were not their own, filmmakers often gave their subjects greater leeway than the tight limits set down in them. Subjects have the right to change their minds or demand to see the content involving them or even the entire film before public screenings.

Showing materials ahead of time will make documentary film subjects to be more comfortable with the exposure they will eventually face and it will reduce the risk of future issues.

Ultimately, the Centre for Media and Social Impact prescribed that filmmakers shared three general ethical principles that they attempted to balance in their work.

- i. They should respect their subject, especially the sensitive or needy ones, in order to protect them from hostilities.
- ii. They should hold their viewers in high esteem and not give the viewers disjointed account that will leave them worse off.
- iii. Respecting their production partners. Not changing the concept or what they set out to do at the outset.

Although these principles provide a clarifying framework within which to discuss ethics in documentary filmmaking, they also highlighted the degree to which filmmakers control the process, content and publication of their films and their subjects' stories.

#### **Self-Assessment Exercises 14**

Give a brief description of ethics in filmmaking.
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### **3.6 Summary**

Ethical communication is an accurate and truthful exchange that is based on the morals and the values of the communicators. Communication ethics is of great importance to professionals, businesses, corporation and individuals. Ethical communication in an organisation makes for effective business practices. An organisation with ethical practice will immediately issue a press statement in case of something that may be injurious to health but one with unethical practice will rather bury the information in order to amass wealth.

These basic ethics give occupational and professional directions on how to distribute information to the public without giving room for offence. Its main focus is on giving credence to available information and being ethical in its management.

Universal codes of professional communication states that unethical communication can disrupt peaceful co-existence in the society and civility in human exchange. National Communication Association advocates honest communication with emphasis on educating others in effective dialogue, discussion, as well as debate.

The ethics of fictional films have been taken care of by the MPA Ratings. But, the principles governing documentary filmmaking covers the duties of the film producer to the subjects of the film, the society in question, and the viewers, especially when other people's stories are being told. Ultimately, the Center for Media and Social Impact concluded that filmmakers shared three general ethical principles that they attempted to balance in their work:

1. Dealing respectfully with their subject.
2. They hold their viewers in high esteem.
3. Respecting their production partners.

## 1.7 Glossary

## 3.8 References/Further Readings

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documentaries 1p lesson plan 0.pdf.

### 3.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s) within the content

#### Exercise 12

- i. Communication ethics is an accurate and truthful exchange that is based on the morals and the values of the communicators.
- ii. Censorship in ethics may be in keeping trade secrets by restricting the amount of information given with regards to a method of production, and in maintaining high moral standard with regards to the quality of production. A social media provider may also reduce the amount of facilities released for its subscribers' use.

#### Exercise 13

- i. Five of the principles governing ethical communication are the following.
  - a. Always seek to bring out the best in communications and interactions with other group members.
  - b. Listen and not interrupt when others speak and avoid side conversation.
  - c. One should always speak with discretion.
  - d. Speak from your own experience and perspective, expressing your own thoughts, needs, and feelings.
  - e. Always try to understand others

#### Exercise 14

The principles governing documentary filmmaking covers the duties of the film producer to the subjects of the film, the society in question, and the viewers, especially when other people's stories are being told.

Two types of partnerships were highlighted by the filmmakers as raising ethical concerns: 1) The filmmaker with the subject(s); 2) the filmmaker with the audience. Documentary film makers prefers to have an informal commitment at the outset, they then allow the situation on ground to determine how they handle the production.

Most of the subjects usually sign releases early in the production process, giving the filmmakers complete editorial control and ownership of the material for any and all uses. Insurers, whose insurance is required for most television airings and theatrical distribution, frequently determine the terms of these releases. Because the terms of these releases were not their own, filmmakers often give their subjects greater leeway than the tight limits set down in them. Thus, subjects have the right to change their minds, which the filmmakers may find to be very unpleasant or demand to see the content involving them or even the entire film before public screenings.